

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of the Claims**

1. (currently amended) A method, comprising:  
receiving, at a bi-directional communications device, an application level gateway (ALG) file;  
comparing, at the bi-directional communications device, at least one compatibility parameter of said ALG file with at least one of at least one features of said bi-directional communications device and at least one non-signature feature expected in received and authentic ALG files by said bi-directional communications device; and  
storing said ALG file at said bi-directional communications device in response to a favorable comparison of said at least one compatibility parameter.
2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
rejecting said ALG file at said bi-directional communications device in response to an unfavorable comparison of said at least one compatibility parameter.
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a header format version of said ALG file.
4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a file size of said ALG file.
5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a header CRC value of said ALG file.
6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a header ~~format version~~ size of said ALG file.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a body CRC value of said ALG file.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a hardware family version of said ALG file.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one compatibility parameter comprises a software family version of said ALG file.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said bi-directional communications device comprises a cable modem.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving step comprises:

periodically polling a service provider to determine if at least one of a new and updated ALG file is available;

sending a request for an available ALG file; and

receiving said requested ALG file from an access network.

13. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving step comprises: receiving a configuration file from said service provider, said configuration file identifying at least one of new and updated ALG files;

sending a request for an available ALG files; and

receiving said requested ALG file from an access network.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a firewall program utilizes said ALG files to control data traffic.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said ALG file has appended thereto a header portion comprising said compatibility parameters selected from the group comprising a header format version, a header size, a header expected CRC, ~~an authentication signature~~, a body size, a body expected CRC, compatible hardware version family, and compatible software version family.

16. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus, comprising:  
means for receiving, at a bi-directional communications device, an application level gateway (ALG) file;

means for comparing, at the bi-directional communications device, at least one compatibility parameter of said ALG file with at least one of at least one features of said bi-directional communications device and at least one non-signature feature expected in received and authentic ALG files by said bi-directional communications device; and

means for storing said ALG file at said bi-directional communications device in response to a favorable comparison of said at least one compatibility parameter.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:  
means for rejecting said ALG file at said bi-directional communications device in response to an unfavorable comparison of said at least one compatibility parameter.

18. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said bi-directional communications device comprises a cable modem.

19. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said ALG file has appended thereto a header portion comprising said compatibility parameters selected from the group comprising a header format version, a header size, a header expected CRC, ~~an authentication signature~~, a body size, a body expected CRC, compatible hardware version family, and compatible software version family.

20. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one compatibility parameter is a non-source-indicating parameter of the AGL file.

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21. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one feature of said bi-directional communications device comprises an amount of available memory in said bi-directional communications device to store the ALG file.